



2006 Soil Survey Program

MapCoast - Continues Subaqueous Soil Mapping

The Mapping Partnership for Coastal Soils and Sediment (MapCoast) continued and expanded its mapping effort into Narragansett Bay and Quonochontaug Pond during 2006. The RI Soil Survey Program received a \$100,000 congressional earmark from Senator Reed's office to continue our mapping protocol. The funding was used to develop a Cooperative Ecosystems Study Unit (CESU) agreement which partially supported the MapCoast field team to collect soil data in coastal areas of Rhode Island. The team focused work in Quonochontaug Pond, Greenwich Bay, Wickford Harbor, and along Jamestown, RI.

In the spring of 2006, MapCoast held its 3rd End Users Conference which was attended by over 100 people involved in coastal activities. The conference was opened with talks of support for MapCoast by both of Rhode Island's US Senators Jack Reed and Lincoln Chaffee. The USDA-NRCS chief of the Soil Survey Division Michael Golden and Deputy Chief, Soil Survey and Resource Assessment William Puckett also attended the conference to talk about the National Cooperative Soil Survey. The conference focused on showing our data collected in Ninigret Pond during 2005-2006 and how the data is made available on the web and how to use the data.

MapCoast will be continuing work during the field season of 2007, locations of areas it will be mapping will be determined by the Steering Team during its spring meeting. People interested in this effort can visit www.mapcoast.org.

Rhode Island Summary

Overview

The National Cooperative Soil Survey Program (NCSS) is a partnership led by NRCS of Federal land management agencies, state agricultural experiment stations and state and local units of government that provide soil survey information necessary for understanding, managing, conserving and sustaining the nation's limited and extremely important soil resources.

The NRCS part of the NCSS was restructured during 2006 to what is called the "Major Land Resource Area Concept". Under this concept all soil survey activities will be handled out of Soil Survey Offices which cross State boundaries and include a large (10 plus million acres) resource area that consists of similar soils, geology, climate, land-use, and agriculture. The office selected which will serve all of Rhode Island is located in Windsor Connecticut (MLRA 144A and 149B).

Accomplishments

Aside from our subaqueous soil priority, a lot of work was also conducted on our terrestrial soil survey during the fiscal year. The following is a list of soil survey activities and brief explanations of the purpose of the activity made during FY 2006:

- Our Envirothon team summer intern, Michelle Marasco worked on scanning the published soil survey report and maps into an electronic copy for users to be able to view the report online. The electronic copy of the survey is linked on the RI NRCS soils page: <http://www.ri.nrcs.usda.gov/technical/soils.html> and also hosted on <http://nesoil.com/ri>. Michelle also worked on scanning historic soil information such as the benchmark soil series reports for Bridgehampton, Paxton, and Charlton soil (major series mapped in RI) along with all of the soil pedon descriptions collected during the mapping progress for RI. These publications and data are also posted on the web.
- URI Graduate Student Margot (Maggie) Payne has joined the RI Soils Team. Maggie is currently working on completing her thesis study titled "Subaqueous Soils, an Indicator of Estuarine Health" she is studying the subaqueous soils in Wickford Harbor, Greenwich Bay, and Little Narragansett Bay. Maggie is working as an intermittent employee until she completes her degree at which time she will work full time on the soils program.
- A work plan for the terrestrial and subaqueous soils was completed. The work plan identifies deficiencies in the existing soils data for RI and outlines a timeline for correcting the data.
- The tabular data (soil interpretations, properties of soils, etc.) was updated in our National Soil Information System (NASIS) database. This was a major upgrade in our soil data initiated by a National Bulletin to address some gaps in our data following several major catastrophic events.
- Conducted numerous educational outreach events which included soil talks to university and grade school classes, regulatory wetland training sessions, Envirothon events, National workshops, forestry groups, and also through numerous publications.

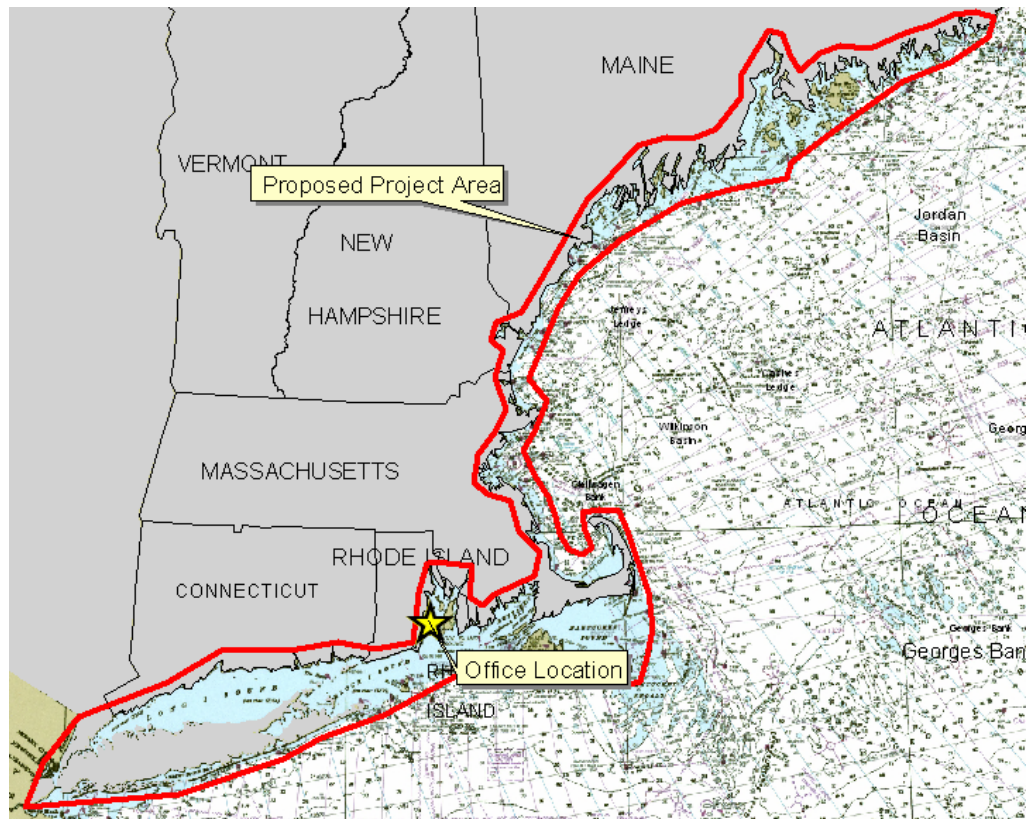
Outlook

With the re-organization of the soil survey program much of the work on the terrestrial soil survey for Rhode Island will be coordinated through the Soil Survey Project Office located in Windsor, Connecticut. The work plan drafted in 2006 identifies the major areas of work to bring the existing soils data up to modern standards. Our MapCoast Partnership remains active in working to achieve our goal of mapping the coastal and shallow water environments in the Ocean State

State Contact

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<http://www.ri.nrcs.usda.gov/technical/soils.html>

Proposed Project area of the Northeast Coastal Zone Soil Survey Initiative. All coastal areas and sub-tidal soil areas to a depth of approximately 2.5 meters are planned to be mapped

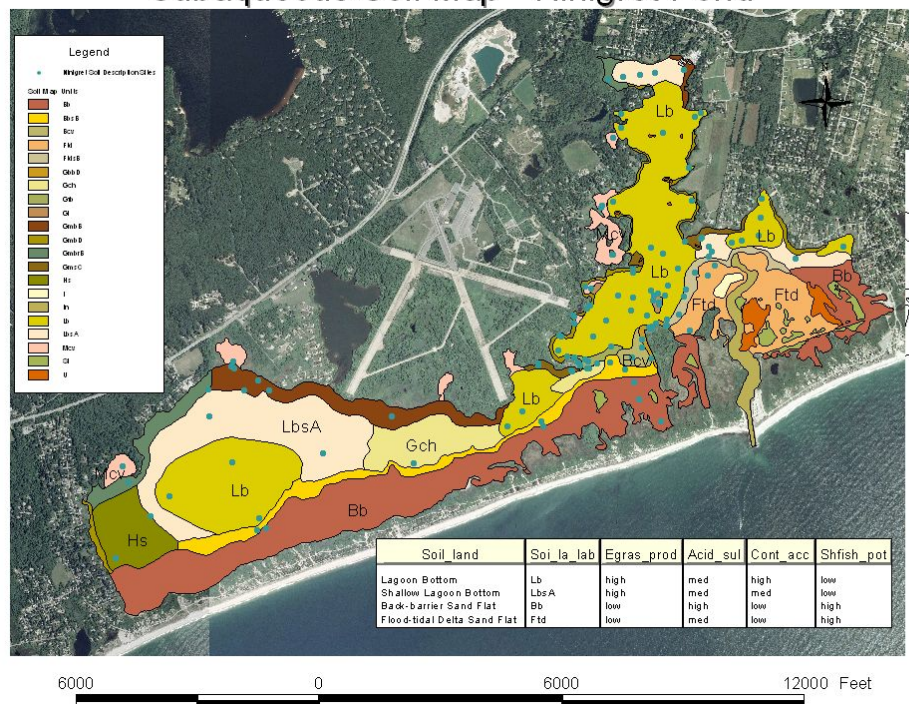


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Subaqueous Soil Map - Ninigret Pond

Example of a Subaqueous Soil Survey map:



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